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## Prosecutor says man accused of killing wife admits plot to cellmate

**James Fayed complained to a fellow inmate that the people who carried out the 2008 attack on Pamela Fayed in Century City had passed up better opportunities to kill his wife. Authorities say James Fayed also plotted from behind bars to kill other participants in the crime.**

By Jack Leonard, Los Angeles Times

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A man accused of masterminding the fatal stabbing of his estranged wife at a Century City parking garage confessed to a jail cellmate that he had arranged the slaying and then plotted from behind bars to kill other participants in the crime, a prosecutor told jurors Wednesday.

Deputy Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Eric Harmon said James Fayed complained to the inmate, who was cooperating with authorities, that the people who carried out the plot passed up several better opportunities to kill Pamela Fayed before striking in such a crowded area.

The prosecutor said Fayed organized the 2008 killing because he was embroiled in a bitter — and potentially expensive — divorce with his estranged wife, and feared she would cooperate with a federal investigation into their international gold trading business.

Harmon played excerpts of the inmate's recorded conversation in which Fayed expressed contempt for his "money-grubbing" wife and said she would not listen to reason.

"She just ran her mouth too much," Fayed said in a federal jail while facing a white-collar prosecution that was later dismissed. "If she'd just kept her mouth shut," he said.

Fayed also discussed paying the cellmate to arrange the killings of the men he had used to carry out the attack on his wife, Harmon said.

Fayed, 48, is on trial for murder and conspiracy to commit murder. If convicted, he could face the death penalty.

His attorney, Mark Werksman, told jurors that his client's cellmate, Shawn Smith, was a habitual liar who tried to entice Fayed into a plot to murder at least one of the men who allegedly carried out his



wife's killing.

Fayed, the attorney said, was confused and tried to adopt the aggressive "macho attitude" that his cellmate projected onto him. He described Fayed as a meticulous businessman who could not have been behind such a clumsy, reckless scheme.

"He's an innocent man wrongly accused of a crime he didn't commit," Werksman said.

Werksman pointed the finger at another possible suspect: Fayed's older sister, Mary Mercedes. He called her possessive and protective of her brother and told jurors she had a motive and the opportunity to kill her sister-in-law.

Mercedes could not be reached for comment.

Pamela Fayed, 44, was attacked July 28, 2008, on the third floor of the parking garage after a meeting earlier that afternoon with her husband and their lawyers.

Pamela was seeking \$66,000 per month in support and attorneys fees and was wrestling with her husband for control of their precious-metals business. Her lawyer had filed court papers seeking nearly \$1 million in sanctions and other fees from James Fayed, alleging that he had failed to give Pamela access to the company's books. A court hearing was scheduled for the next day.

Pamela was trying to enter her car when she was stabbed 13 times by a hooded assailant. The man fled in a red Suzuki SUV that had been rented by the Fayed's business, Goldfinger Inc., authorities said. Police found Pamela Fayed's blood inside the vehicle, even though it had been cleaned after the killing, Harmon told jurors.

Prosecutors allege that the vehicle was driven to and from the scene by Jose Moya, who worked on the Fayed's Moorpark ranch. Harmon said Fayed paid Moya \$25,000 to carry out the slaying. The prosecutor said Moya, a gang member, hired another gang member, Gabriel Marquez, to help. Marquez, in turn, hired Steven Simmons, a member of the same gang, to stab Pamela Fayed, Harmon said.

Cellphone tower records show that all three men were in the area of the crime scene around the time of the killing, Harmon told jurors. The three are expected to be tried separately and have pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor said the case amounted to a love story, but one that involved "boy meets gold" rather than "boy meets girl."

"It's that greed, that love of gold, that caused this man ... to have his wife murdered for financial gain," Harmon told jurors.

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